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LEAVEN LEAVES

n False Philosophy.

141. d.
511.
Huntingford.

False Philosophy Considered.

By BISHOP HUNTINGFORD.

EDINBURGH: JAMES HOGG.
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Leaven Leaves.

"*A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.*"
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" Beware leſt any man ſpoil you through philoſophy."—*Coloſſians* ii. 8.

FALSE PHILOSOPHY CONSIDERED.

On men of ingenuous but inexperienced minds, there is nothing ſo impoſing as a ſpecious name. To ſuch perſons, under the diſguiſe of an aſſumed appellation, vices recommend themſelves with ſo much ſucceſs, as to deceive the unwary into a confident opinion that their conduct is proper, although to judicious obſervers it appears palpably wrong. And this deluſion continues to beguile them till ſome unhappy conſequence begins to create in them ſuſpicions of error, and at

length convinces them that they have been too long miſtaken. In private life, ſome are brought into great diſtreſs, from having acted under an idea that inattention to pecuniary concerns was a mark of generoſity. Others fall into vicious practices, becauſe eaſy compliance with every propoſal of a companion appears to them a proof of good temper. Others commit irregularities, through a perſuaſion that to deſpiſe the uniformity of rules is an indication of high ſpirit. Others violate the decencies of politeneſs, conceiving diſregard to forms a ſign of ſuperior ability. Then, again, in public life, many do in reality ſerve the cauſe of licentiouſneſs, whilſt with the pureſt intentions they mean only to extend liberty; and many give encouragement to indifference for all religion, whilſt they imagine themſelves to be promoting only liberality of ſentiment. Now, in the one

caſe, admirable are generoſity, good temper, high ſpirit, and ſuperior ability: but, ſurely, no man in his right ſenſes can ſay it is admirable, either to bring on himſelf indigence through imprudent neglect of his property, or to become depraved through weakneſs in yielding to ſolicitations, or to injure ſociety by bad example, or to inſult eſtabliſhed uſages of behaviour by an affected impertinence. So, in the other caſe, liberty is precious as life itſelf; and liberality in thinking and judging is part of Chriſtian charity, than which nothing is more lovely: but, ſurely, no man of mature judgment can wiſh genuine liberty to be converted into a cloak for every ſpecies of enormity; nor liberality of ſentiment be made the occaſion of propagating direct Atheiſm. Yet, in theſe points of view, are to be ſeen many meaſures which upright but miſguided men frequently purſue

merely becauſe they do not fully apprehend the tendencies of their actions.

Perſons, therefore, who want experience ſhould be extremely cautious how they depart from thoſe principles which have been received generally, becauſe founded on ſolid reaſon, and how they deviate from thoſe cuſtoms which have obtained long, becauſe in their effect they have proved good. Thus circumſpect ſhould all perſons be who cannot yet have acquired much practical knowledge of the world, leſt, inſtead of becoming what they anxiouſly wiſh to become, more beneficial to mankind than thoſe who have preceded them, they ſhould actually, though inadvertently, be inſtrumental towards occaſioning ſome of the worſt evils that can befall human ſociety.

The preſent generation hath been injured by nothing ſo much as by the im-

poſing name of PHILOSOPHY. Philoſophy, when it is employed in promoting good morals, in cultivating liberal arts, in ſtrengthening ſocial union, in contemplating the works of creation, and thus leading man to acknowledge and adore the Supreme Being, is a noble ſcience: it is noble, becauſe true; and true, becauſe conſiſtent and correſponding with the nature of man, and with the relations he bears to his fellow-creatures and to his Maker! But that which *aſſumes* the name of philoſophy, and under this maſk debauches morals, diſſuades from mental improvement, diſunites ſociety, diſcerns not the wiſdom of God either in the earth or the heavens, and diſcourages men from paying the tribute of gratitude to their univerſal Father: ſuch a ſyſtem of doctrines is deteſtable, becauſe falſe; and falſe, becauſe contrary to the nature of man, and

his ſeveral relations to ſociety and God. Real philoſophy we ſhould cheriſh and love: it is the friend of man, being the ſource of wiſdom, the origin of many comforts, and the handmaid of religion. That which comes under its borrowed name, which puts on a ſemblance of what, in fact, it is not, and which, if we are compelled to call philoſophy, we muſt, if we would ſpeak properly, term falſe philoſophy—*that* is the evil againſt which we are to guard; and that the credulous and innocent may not be betrayed by the deceits, the forgeries, and enchantments of this viſored impoſtor,* let us now enumerate ſome leading points in which this philoſophy is falſe.

* "*Hence with thy brew'd enchantments, foul deceiver!*
Haſt thou betray'd my credulous innocence
With viſor'd falſehood and baſe forgery?"
MILTON'S "Comus," 696.

1. It is falſe in aſſerting that man in ſociety retains all his natural rights. In exchange for the more certain ſubſiſtence, the more ſecure protection, the greater degree of aſſiſtance in times of ſickneſs, or need, or caſualty; in exchange for the delights of friendly intercourſe, and the improvements of civiliſation; in exchange for theſe bleſſings which man enjoys in ſociety, he relinquiſhes the ſavage liberty of roaming at large for prey, of exerciſing horrid vengeance on the perſon who has offended him, and of following without control his ferocious and brutal paſſions, to the annoyance, diſgrace, and deſtruction of his ſpecies.

2. It is falſe in maintaining that all men are equal. In every point of view, there is among men remarkable and unavoidable inequality. For neither have all men the ſame ſtature, nor the ſame

agility, nor the ſame ſtrength, nor the ſame ſagacity, which are qualities chiefly valued by the barbarian; nor have all the ſame genius, nor the ſame induſtry, nor the ſame prudence, which are endowments excellent in civil ſociety. From the diſparity with which theſe bodily and mental faculties are diſtributed, through the natural operation of cauſe and effect, men neceſſarily fall into inequality of condition independently of all political diſtinctions. If, moreover, we conſider man as intended for civil ſociety, by ſuch conſtitution of his nature he is deſigned for a ſtate of inequality; for the very exiſtence of ſociety, to any great extent, depends on order. But order requires that ſome ſhould direct, and others be directed; which implies the ſubordination of inferiors to ſuperiors.

3. It is falſe in its preſumptive and arrogant opinion that man is perfect.

Whence originate the various enormities that diſgrace human nature, and whence the neceſſity for eſtabliſhing any laws to reſtrain vicious propenſities, if man be perfect? The hiſtory of every ſociety which has been known to inſtitute ſuch laws is in direct contradiction to all ideas of human perfection, and too evidently demonſtrates that man is imperfect. For all laws would be unneceſſary if men were perfect; the neceſſity for them ariſes from our imperfection. Will it be ſaid, that laws are the ſource of human depravity? That *ſome* laws may tend to corrupt man, will readily be allowed; but that *all* laws have ſuch an effect muſt poſitively be denied. The laws, for inſtance, which forbid me to murder, or ſteal, or commit adultery, or bear falſe witneſs, can never lead me to immorality. To affirm, then, that becauſe *ſome* laws may have a bad influence

on morals, therefore *all* laws do thus operate, is to affirm what is falſe in fact; and it is, moreover, to argue from a *particular* inſtance to a *general* concluſion, which is falſe in reaſoning.

Beſides, to aſſert that laws, abſtractedly and univerſally conſidered, are the ſource of human depravity, is to call *that* the cauſe which in reality is but the effect; it is to ſpeak as though laws had made men, and not men laws. Whereas the contrary is the truth: and if men have made laws againſt murder, theft, adultery, and other vices, they were compelled to make theſe proviſions, by the experience they derived from obſervation of the human character, and by conviction that their fellow-creatures had actually committed ſuch crimes.

4. It is falſe in expecting that any human inſtitution can be perfect. Can the body be ſound, the limbs of which

are unſound? or the waters ſweet, the fountains of which are bitter? So neither can inſtitutions framed by imperfect men be in all parts perfect. Every work of man muſt, more or leſs, bear ſigns of that imperfection which is inſeparable from the nature of its author.

5. It is falſe in propoſing to endanger an entire ſyſtem, upon the *whole* beneficial, for the ſake of improving a part, objectionable perhaps, but not injurious. Granting there may and will be imperfections in all human inſtitutions, yet where the good preponderates, the evil is not ſo to be regarded as that the former ſhall be hazarded for the *chance* of removing the latter. In the body natural, to hurt the vitals in order to heal the extremities, would be an act either of ignorance or of deſperation. If in ſociety there exiſt uſages of acknowledged defect when conſidered abſtractedly, but

which, from being counterbalanced by other circumſtances, are not prejudicial, and which cannot be changed without very material detriment to ſociety itſelf; then to ſacrifice the welfare of the community at large to conſiderations of partial advantage, would be repugnant to every principle of common prudence.

6. It is falſe in conceiving that becauſe the uſe of anything is good, therefore the abuſe of it muſt be alſo good. Freedom of action is good; but if that freedom be extended to ſubverſion of all laws, in its exceſs it is not good. Freedom of ſpeech is alſo good; but if it be carried beyond the bounds of decency, to ſlander and blaſphemy, in its injurious and impious perverſion it is not good.

7. It is falſe in ſuppoſing that the operation of the ſame principle ſhould always proceed in the ſame direction. That man ſhould enjoy civil and reli-

gious liberty is a virtuous principle, which ſhould actuate the mind of every honeſt and religious perſon; and the maintainer of this principle will never ſupport either deſpotiſm or perſecution, becauſe both are inconſiſtent with it. But neither, on the other hand, will he approve of endeavours which, under the ſanction of civil liberty, would contend for exemption from lawful authority, or which, under the pretence of religious liberty, would introduce Atheiſm. For, in his conceptions, civil liberty is ſomewhat very different from the rejecting of all legal reſtraint whatever; and religious liberty ſomewhat very different from Atheiſm, which has nothing to do with religion. Conſiſtency with his principle would require him to diſſent, not only, on the one hand, from meaſures that were arbitrary, but alſo, on the other, from ſuch as were licentious—both being

equally dangerous to real liberty. His principle would continue the ſame, and the application of it would be with the ſame views; but the direction would vary as the caſe varies. The expert mariner throws his ballaſt on that ſide of the veſſel which wants its due proportion of burden; the mechanic applies the weight to that ſide of the ſcale where the equipoiſe is failing; the judicious commander ſupports that part of the army which appears the weakeſt: the object of each, in his reſpective way, will be the ſame, and they will all act on the common principle of doing their beſt as the nature of the caſe may happen to demand.

8. It is falſe in denying the difference of things. By what means man obtains a general ſenſe of right and wrong, whether from the conſtitution of his nature, as ſome conceive, or from education, as

others maintain, it is needleſs to diſpute; the fact is, that in civil ſociety every one has that general ſenſe.* And even the very perſons who are moſt buſy in confounding good and evil, do nevertheleſs ſhow, when their intereſt is concerned, that they clearly diſcriminate the one from the other; for the moſt diſhoneſt will rather truſt their perſons and pro-

* "*Who can doubt whether mankind have been univerſally perſuaded that there is a right and a wrong in human conduct? ſome things which in certain circumſtances they ought to do, and other things which they ought not to do? The univerſality of theſe opinions, and of many others that might be named, is ſufficiently evident from the whole tenor of men's conduct, as far as our acquaintance reaches, and from the records of hiſtory, in all ages and nations, that are tranſmitted to us.*—Dr Reid on the Intellectual Powers of Man, Eſſay I. c. ii. p. 44, ed. 1785.

perty to a man of known integrity than to one of ſuſpicious character: the reaſon is, they rely on the virtue of the former, but miſtruſt the fidelity of the latter. And this perſuaſion of placing confidence in the juſt, but of withholding it from the unjuſt, operates univerſally throughout mankind, and plainly proves that, in the common concerns of life, the difference of right and wrong not only *may* be diſtinguiſhed, but actually *is* diſcerned, and applied as a direction for proper conduct in the prudent management of temporal affairs.

This power of diſcriminating between right and wrong, between good and evil, may, however, be proved by an inſtance of a kind more generous than that of regard to ſelf-intereſt. Whence is it, that, on reviewing the lives of men who for ages paſt have ceaſed to exiſt, as their hiſtory proceeds, our minds imperceptibly

tibly annex to their actions either approbation or cenſure unpremeditated and ſpontaneous? We admire the juſt and humane, like Titus; we abhor the oppreſſive and cruel, like Domitian. The unerring judgment we thus paſs is the effect of a diſtinguiſhing principle in man's nature; a principle which, however dormant or perverted it may be in a ſavage people, hath nevertheleſs been always prompt in perceiving, and right in deciding, amongſt men living in that ſtate where *alone* the human faculties and qualities can be ſeen in perfection, the ſtate of civiliſation.

But if we have within us a principle thus capable of diſcriminating between good and evil, and if that principle doth ſo diſcriminate, then that there ſhould be ſome things good and ſome evil, and that there ſhould be a difference between them, is a neceſſary conſequence.

Another argument to the ſame purpoſe ariſes from conſidering that indignation which perſons, who, in general, perhaps, are not very ſolicitous reſpecting their character, do nevertheleſs ſhow when charged with crimes of which they are innocent. And this anger is not the conſequence of cool reflection, and therefore cannot be ſaid to be the effect of fear leſt puniſhment ſhould enſue; it is the inſtantaneous and involuntary impulſe of the mind, which is exaſperated at the idea of having been thought guilty in a baſe act, and reſents the injuſtice of a ſuſpicion not merited. Here indeed is a double proof of power to diſcern right and wrong: for the perſon thus accuſed, by his being irritated at a falſe charge, immediately diſcovers that he diſtinguiſhes moral evil from moral good; and by his feeling pain under an accuſation not deſerved, he manifeſts how perfectly

he underſtands whether he is treated juſtly or unjuſtly by others.

There is, then, a difference in things; and, commonly ſpeaking, it is clear to the apprehenſion of all men.

9. It is falſe, in teaching to do evil that good may come of it; or, in other words, that the end ſanctifies the means. In this country it will ſcarcely be denied that every one who lives in ſociety has a claim on that ſociety for juſtice and protection. But if it be an allowed maxim that men may do evil for the production of ſome good, then it will not be improbable (becauſe the caſe has happened) that ſome perſons under the deluſion of this principle may, with a view to ſome imaginary good, not only refuſe you juſtice, but proceed to treat you with the groſſeſt injuſtice—may firſt plunder your property, and then deprive you of life, though on your part no

offence hath been committed againſt either law or equity. Where then would be that ſecurity of rights, which from ſociety you are encouraged to expect, and warranted in demanding?

Again, the baſis of civil ſociety is mutual confidence. But what man of common prudence will commit either his property or his perſon to the care of another, who holds himſelf at liberty to betray his truſt, and even deſtroy his friend, provided he doth but intend to appropriate the ſpoils to ſome good purpoſe?

Thus, then, this principle goes to the diſſolution of all ſociety; and if ſo, muſt be rejected as not compatible or reconcilable with that ſtate for which man is intended, and in which, when duly conſtituted, he finds the greater portion of happineſs.

But, in vindication of this perverſe

paradox, the public good of ſociety has been pretended. It would, however, be difficult, nay even impoſſible, to ſhow that it can be for the public good of ſociety to defeat the very cauſe, and counteract the very ends, for which all ſociety is inſtituted; both which evils this paradox completely works, by baniſhing confidence, and by violating at pleaſure the rights of the ſociety exiſting.

But its advocate then pleads the good of poſterity. Whoſe poſterity? By the ſudden death of thoſe whom this maxim may have taken off, he has done his utmoſt that they ſhall have no poſterity; and by holding out an example to his own poſterity, that they may do evil to produce good, he has taught them to rob and deſtroy each other, as he has robbed and deſtroyed the men of his own generation. For what was once in itſelf lawful muſt always be lawful: if robbery

and aſſaſſination be lawful to the maintainer of this principle, they will be lawful to his children. And thus by precedent he eſtabliſhes a maxim which, purſued to its conſequences, would tend to the utter extinction of all ſociety.

Seen, then, in theſe points of view, the paradox of doing evil that good may come of it, is, of all others, the moſt miſchievous that ever entered the mind of man.

Sophiſtry may puzzle plain ſenſe, and violence may compel the oppreſſed to ſubmit; but, in common apprehenſion, honeſty, and fact, this is the truth, that if men chooſe to continue members of ſociety, they are bound to acquieſce in thoſe firſt principles on which alone ſociety *can* be ſo formed as to anſwer the ends of its inſtitution. Theſe principles are, firſt, that no man is allowed knowingly and wilfully to do wrong unto an-

other; ſecondly, that everything is wrong which is unjuſt; thirdly, that everything is unjuſt which will produce more harm than benefit to the perſon affected. Where ſuch principles are eſtabliſhed, we have grounds of confidence on which we may ſecurely reſt; but ſhould the other maxim prevail, on *whom* or on *what* could we depend?

10. It is falſe in aſſerting that men are not required to be juſt in public life, as they are in private.

Society cannot exiſt to any uſeful purpoſe without mutual confidence, nor mutual confidence without the uniform prevalence of truth and juſtice. Therefore, though in intercourſe with the world there may ariſe many caſes in which it may be difficult to aſcertain preciſely on which ſide truth and juſtice ſhould lead us to determine, yet from *intending* and *endeavouring* to follow the

ſpirit of theſe principles no man is in any caſe exempt; and for this reaſon, viz., becauſe no man, living in ſociety, can in any caſe be exempt from diſcharging a ſocial duty to which he is competent; and a ſocial duty it is, incumbent on every perſon alike, whether he be retired, or whether he concern himſelf with public affairs, to do his utmoſt for the conſervation of ſociety, which end can be attained *only* by adhering to truth and juſtice, ſince they are the foundations of confidence, that baſis of civil union.

The ſame reaſoning which applies to the individual in ſociety applies alſo to the ſociety itſelf with reſpect to alliance. Where there is no confidence between one nation and another, there can be no alliance; and where truth and juſtice are wantonly violated, there can be no confidence. Therefore nations, if they wiſh and profeſs to make alliance, and

of courſe political adminiſtrators of ſuch nations, are bound to obſerve ſuch conduct towards their allies as to the party with whom they have contracted alliance may be ſerviceable to the ends for which the alliance was contracted, and may be perfectly conſiſtent with equity and good faith. National ſafety, national duty, and national character require this conduct.

11. It is falſe in conceiving that experiments may be made in morals as in phyſics.

Natural and moral philoſophy work not on the ſame ſubjects: the one is employed on matter, the other on mind. The effects of experiment on matter may be infinite as the particles of matter, and therefore incalculable; but the effects of experiment in moral principles applied to the human mind are comparatively few, and therefore can be aſcer-

tained. Such effects are few, because human nature is universally constituted of the same passions; and those effects can easily be ascertained, because every kind of principle, both consistent and inconsistent with man's nature, hath been already and long since tried, and the consequences are recorded. And it is impossible now to conceive any moral principle the effect of which might not be foreseen, because nothing *new* in morals can be devised; and as for the operation of principles *already known* (which indeed are all that can be discovered), it has always been found that men influenced by similar principles and placed in similar situations act nearly in the same manner; and that certain moral causes will produce certain corresponding moral effects. The attempt, therefore, to introduce new moral principles in a highly polished and civilised people is

extravagant and wild, becauſe vain and fruitleſs.

But the extravagance and wildneſs of the attempt are among the ſlighteſt cauſes that render it objectionable. If the buſineſs terminated only in folly, there were in it little danger to be apprehended. It leads, however, to moſt fatal conſequences; for it encourages men to act in contradiction to thoſe relations which they bear to ſociety. Does it not, for inſtance, contradict ſuch relations to aſſert that every one has a right to all he can obtain by ſtrength or power, in contempt of law? Yet this doctrine has been more than once propagated, and (what is ſtill worſe) has been made a principle of action, the force of which has been carried into immediate effect.

12. It is falſe in teaching men to obey the impulſe of paſſion rather than the

dictates of reaſon. It is clearly man's duty to follow, by virtuous means, that which ſhall ultimately terminate in the greateſt natural and moral good. The two ſprings of human action are reaſon and paſſion. Now any one paſſion, unreſtrained by reaſon, will, in the end, produce injury. Thus, hope may lead to credulity, which in matters of buſineſs may occaſion ruin; fear may unnerve a man againſt impending danger; anger may precipitate him into madneſs; deſire may plunge him into ſenſual vices. Reaſon is the faculty by which theſe and all paſſions are reſtrained from running into excess. But if ſo, it is the power which ought to direct man's conduct, becauſe it will prevent him from incurring thoſe evils into which the paſſions might plunge him; and becauſe reaſon itſelf can lead to no evils, ſo long as it retains its eſſential nature, that of judg-

ing rightly. If once we begin to judge not rightly, we are then proceeding not according to the dictates of reaſon, but the deluſions of error.

13. It is falſe in aſſerting that man is merely material. Man thinks; matter does not think. Man has ſelf-will and ſelf-motion; matter has neither. Man, therefore, muſt be conſtituted of *ſomething* very different and diſtinct from matter, and *that* is what we call mind. Should it in reply be ſaid, God *may*, if he chooſes, make matter capable of thinking, of willing, and of moving, the anſwer is, firſt, that to overlook what God *has* done, and argue from what he *may* do, is to reject experience for ſpeculation, and ſubſtitute theory for facts, which is a vicious mode of reaſoning; and in the next place, it is to introduce confuſion of terms: for if matter were made capable of thinking, willing, and

moving, it would be no longer matter, it would be ſomething very different from it, becauſe it would have properties which no combination or diviſion of matter was ever known to produce. If the eſſential properties of anything be altered, it becomes in its nature new; and ſo the caſe would be with reſpect to matter.

14. It is falſe in ſuppoſing that nothing is to be admitted as true which is not capable of mathematical demonſtration. It is contrary to the condition of man to require mathematical demonſtration in all caſes before we aſſent to the truth of them; for the concerns of life could not be carried on if we did not rely on the word of each other for facts done at preſent; and we muſt remain in total ignorance of circumſtances paſt, if we did not admit the evidence of hiſtorical teſtimony. But neither the aſſertions of men living nor the evidence

of hiſtorical teſtimony amount to mathematical demonſtration, although, when the perſons ſpeaking or writing cannot reaſonably be ſuſpected of falſehood, their ſtatements do amount to moral certainty. With reliance, however, on this certainty, though ſhort of demonſtration, we daily act, and on every principle of reaſon are juſtified both in thus acting, and in believing facts which happened in ages antecedent to that in which we now exiſt.

15. It is falſe, in oppoſing ſpeculative objections to poſitive facts.

In natural religion, it is a fact that God hath given us life, and various means of enjoying life. This is a proof of God's goodneſs. It is a fact also that he hath made the ſun, moon, ſtars, earth, and waters, and fitted them for many uſeful purpoſes. Theſe prove the wiſdom and the power of God. All objections, then, which can poſſibly be

raiſed, taken from imperfections imaginary or real in the works of creation, can never *diſprove* that God is benevolent, wiſe, and powerful. The utmoſt avail of ſuch objections can only be a ſuppoſition that he might have been *more* benevolent, and have ſhown *greater* marks of wiſdom and power. But who can undertake to demonſtrate ſuch a preſumptuous ſuppoſition, when he cannot know thoroughly even this our own ſyſtem, which is but one part of the univerſe? On the other hand, reaſon can produce many arguments which ſhould convince us *all is for the beſt*, according to the *preſent* conſtitution of the world, and the *preſent* ſtate of exiſtence.

Again, in revealed religion, that Chriſt roſe from the dead is a fact atteſted more ſtrongly than any other fact recorded in ancient hiſtory. All objections, then, which can poſſibly be made againſt his

doctrines can never disprove this fact; and on this it is we rest our faith.

16. It is false in dissembling the difficulties which attend infidelity.

In natural religion, it is much more difficult to believe that the world, formed as it is, with design, and governed with regularity, should be made and preserved by *chance—i. e., by nothing*—than it is to believe that it was made and governed by an Intelligent Being competent to the effecting of so stupendous a work.

In revealed religion, it is much more difficult to believe that Christianity arose from *no certain* ground, than it is to believe that Christ really and actually existed. For to what adequate cause but such existence can it be ascribed that his life is recorded by four histories, for the country and era of which we have strong presumptive proof from their style and correspondence with the circumstances

of their time; and for the writers of which we have teſtimonies from the age immediately ſubſequent to them? To what other cauſe can it be aſcribed that his doctrines ſhould be the ſubject of many epiſtles, which, by ſtriking coincidences of time and place, and minute particulars, bear ſingular characters of authenticity; and that paſſages ſhould be cited from thoſe hiſtories and epiſtles, and alluſions made to them by many authors, who are known to have written at the diſtance of at leaſt ſixteen hundred years from the preſent date? To what other cauſe can it be aſcribed, that, in a vaſt empire, idolatry ſhould have yielded to the eſtabliſhment of his religion? that many nations have made his principles the baſis of their legiſlation? that, for ſeventeen centuries, there has been a ſucceſſion of men profeſſing themſelves his diſciples? and that, at this day, in

ſeveral countries, civiliſed and enlightened, is obſerved a ſolemn ceremony in commemoration of his death? To what other cauſe *can* all theſe effects be aſcribed, but to the ſole cauſe which is adequate to account for them—viz., the real and actual exiſtence of Chriſt? Surely it is beyond compariſon more difficult to believe that thoſe notorious and extraordinary facts ſhould reſt on no other foundation but fiction, than it is to believe that Chriſt lived, died, and roſe again, in the manner related of him by the evangeliſts and apoſtles.

17. It is falſe in confounding remote conſequences with primary qualities. Thus, the religious wars which have been carried on by Chriſtians it charges on Chriſtianity. Now it is incontrovertible that the language of Chriſtianity, as found in the Goſpel, ſpeaks nothing but peace; and that the ſpirit of Chris-

tianity is ſo benevolent as to forbid all unjuſt aggreſſion, and to allow reſiſtance and repulſion of injury ſo far only as in ſelf-protection may be prudent and neceſſary. If, then, the profeſſors of Chriſtianity have uſed violence where no danger threatened them, or have propagated their principles of faith by means of cruelty and perſecution, the criminality of ſuch proceedings muſt be imputed, not to Chriſtianity itſelf, but to the profeſſors of it, who were influenced either by miſtaken judgment, or miſguided zeal, or ambition, or pride, or avarice, or ſome other malignant paſſion, which impoſed itſelf on them under the name and appearance of conſcience. To charge on Chriſtianity, which in itſelf is good, either the errors or the vices of the perſons who do indeed embrace, but who alſo pervert or diſobey it, is ſo palpable an inſtance of arguing from *abuſe*,

as no juſt reaſoning can poſſibly admit. And equally unfair is it to blame Chriſtianity for the conſequences that enſue from the corruption of its doctrines and the neglect of its poſitive precepts, as it were to blame juriſprudence, becauſe many have been ruined by legal chicane; or medicine, becauſe the deaths of many have been haſtened by empiriciſm; or literature, becauſe men who have turned their abilities to the vileſt of purpoſes have written againſt everything that is praiſeworthy and ſacred before God and man; or commerce, becauſe the ſupplies which it adminiſters to our wants are employed to pamper the appetite of luxury and to ſwell the riot of exceſs. If either Chriſtianity, or juriſprudence, or medicine, or literature, or commerce, has been made a pretended ground for the introduction of evil, ſuch pretence has been in open contradiction to what

was firſt intended in the cultivation of them; and the miſchief is chargeable, not on them, which in themſelves are good, and which in their original tendencies lead to good, but either on the folly or the wickedneſs of men, who have perverted the nature of theſe bleſſings, and have directed them to improper ends. Surely the clearneſs of the fountain is not affected, becauſe its ſtream at a remote diſtance is diſcoloured by the ſoil over which it flows; nor is the light of the ſun *therefore* not bright, becauſe on earth we may behold it through ſome dark body interpoſed between our eye and the ſource of effulgence.

But farther, it is diſingenuous, in ſuppreſſing this fact—viz., that for the thouſands who may have ſuffered in wars termed holy, millions have lived in more undiſturbed enjoyment of their property, in ſafer protection of their perſons, in

ſtricter purity of morals, in more uniform practice of private and domeſtic virtues, of ſocial and public duties, under the benign and vital influence of Chriſtianity, than under any other ſyſtem of religion, or avowal of irreligion, that can be named. In no country not Chriſtian are there ſo many inſtances of good effects reſulting from any other cauſe whatever, as are found to ariſe in nations that are Chriſtian from the impreſſions made directly and indirectly by Chriſtianity, operating as it does on our laws, our ſentiments, our manners, and our habits. Say, then, ſhall we relinquiſh the religion of the Goſpel, and inſtead of it adopt either the looſe indifference of Scepticiſm, or the pitiable uncertainties of Deiſm, or the unbounded ſenſuality of Mahometaniſm, or the degrading idolatries of thoſe who worſhip Brahma or Foi? or ſhall we ruſh precipitately into

that Atheiſm which at once throws off all reſtraint on the paſſions, diſregards all maxims of equity, diſſolves all the ties of ſocial connection, ſteels the heart againſt the fine feelings of humanity, ſheds human blood without a pang of remorſe, and makes man to man a creature more ſavage than any beaſt of the foreſt is to one of its own ſpecies? But theſe are the perſuaſions on religious ſubjects which prevail in the nations moſt important on the face of the earth: ſay, then, ſhall we, in exchange for any one of theſe, or for any one of the cruel and abſurd rites in the iſlands of the Southern Ocean, reſign the rational, ſober, mild, and merciful doctrines of Evangelical Chriſtianity? That ſo dire infatuation may never poſſeſs our minds, let us earneſtly endeavour, as we value the dignity and happineſs of human nature.

18. It is falſe in excluding Divine

Providence from the government of the world.

It is the firſt property of matter to be inactive. The planets are material, but do, nevertheleſs, perform their periodical revolutions. There muſt, then, have been originally ſome power, independent of the planets themſelves, which communicated to them their primary motion; and that power is the effect of Divine Providence.

Again, man hath no power to command that the earth ſhall produce, and the ſeaſons mature, the various fruits on which he ſubſiſts. But there is a Power independent of man, independent of the earth and ſeaſons, which through means of the earth and ſeaſons doth furniſh him with abundance of all ſupplies that either neceſſity may crave or luxury deſire. The exerciſe of that power is a manifeſtation of providence in Him by whom it is exerciſed.

The life of man depends ſo much on the perfect ſtate of many minute parts in the human frame, that it might be ſhortened by obſtructions in ſeveral veſicles. Theſe obſtructions and other injuries it is not in the power of man to avert; but there is a Power, independent of man, which doth avert them. This, then, is a demonſtration of a particular Providence over each individual.

Again, though in the common affairs of the world there is ſuch a degree of correſpondence between the means and the end as to juſtify and encourage us in adopting certain meaſures for the accompliſhing of certain purpoſes, yet, on various occaſions, we find effects in no way anſwering to viſible cauſes. The wiſdom of man is baffled, his counſels are fruſtrated, his efforts prove abortive, and yet, ſo far as human prudence could judge, the deſigns were calculated for

inſuring ſucceſs in the enterpriſe undertaken. But there is a Power that overrules all human endeavours; that often produces a conſequence diametrically oppoſite to what was expected; that is particularly diſcernible in its benign operations to educe good from what ſeemed to threaten evil:* all which exertions of power are farther demonſtrations of Providence applied by ſome Being, who is far above all that man can behold or comprehend.

Of a ſuperintending Providence theſe are evidences direct, which no ſubtleties of diſpute can poſſibly overthrow, ſo far as the facts themſelves extend. Inſtances of caſes that may *appear* to contradict, could not invalidate facts which

* " *I cannot go*
Where univerſal love not ſmiles around,
Suſtaining all yon orbs and all their ſuns,
From ſeeming evil ſtill educing good."
Thomſon's " Hymn."

positively prove, the exercise of Providence. The utmost which such instances could do would be to furnish a *specious* argument for *supposing* only that the operations of Providence might be *more* wide; they never could show its operations to be altogether non-existent, so far as facts prove them actually to exist. But is man, then, so acquainted with the *whole* system of divine administration that he cannot possibly labour under any *misconceptions* when he passes censure on *parts* of it? Can he undertake to demonstrate that what in *one* respect may have the *appearance* of casualty, *cannot* possibly in *many other* respects have all the marks of final design? Yet, until man can prove that any arrangement in the dispensations of God to this world is either in itself nugatory, or in all its relations inadequate and improper for the purpose it is

to ſerve, he is not better qualified to pronounce *this* or *that* event repugnant to ideas of Providence, than a child is enabled to pronounce *this* or *that* action of his parent repugnant to diſcretion.

19. It is falſe in conceiving it no part of man's duty to make *open profeſſion* that he believes there is a God.

Not to *profeſs* that we believe there is a God, is, in effect, either to deny or to diſſemble that God is our Creator and Preſerver. But reaſon can prove ſuch denial contrary to fact; and ſuch diſſimulation is irreconcilable with the gratitude which enforces thankfulneſs from the creature to his Creator; with the reverence which an Almighty Being can claim from one who is dependent on him; and with that love which ſhould prompt every mind of right diſpoſitions openly and inceſſantly to extol him to whom it is indebted for ſo many bleſs-

ings. Add to this, that he who doth not himſelf *profeſs* to believe there is a God, influences others, ſo far as his example has any weight, to act in the ſame manner; and thus he is inſtrumental towards what we have already proved contradictory to right reaſon, the excluſion of God and his providence from the government of the univerſe.

20. It is falſe in diſcouraging religious worſhip; for, by ſo doing, it acts in contradiction to that gratitude which, on a principle of moral obligation, is due from man who receives, to God who confers, ſo many and ſo great benefits; and inconſiſtently with that prudence which directs all who deſire a continuance of bleſſings to ſupplicate the Giver of them for ſuch continuance. Then, again, it is in oppoſition both to the nature of man, who is made capable of religious ſentiments indiſputably for religious pur-

poſes; and in oppoſition, alſo, to the general conſent of mankind, the hiſtory of which through all ages, in ſituations where the mental faculties have been duly improved, ſhows men to have always agreed in the propriety of obſerving *ſome* religious uſages, however different may have been their opinions as to the particular modes of worſhip they would adopt. Add to this, that neglect of religion tends to impair the moſt energetic of all motives to the practice of private virtue, by weakening which, and by diminiſhing private virtue, it leads ultimately to the corruption of public morals; from which corruption proceeds decay of public good, ſo far as that term implies order, induſtry, valour, honour, and genuine freedom,—qualities which are productive of the greateſt glory and of the higheſt happineſs to any nation.

21. It is falſe in denying the ſoul's

immortality. For, firſt, it takes for granted what never can be proved, that man is altogether material, which is an arbitrary aſſumption. Secondly, the aſſumption itſelf is falſe; becauſe it is known that man has properties of thinking, willing, and moving, which belong not to matter, and therefore man muſt be conſtituted of ſomething very different from matter. Thirdly, it is preſuming on more than the doctrine of chances would allow; for, as we *do* exiſt in this ſtate, it is at leaſt an *even* chance that we *may* exiſt in another. Fourthly, it contradicts the apprehenſions of the human mind, which, on the commiſſion of a crime againſt morality, anticipates the rendering of an account to an inviſible Being. Fifthly, it is repugant to the general expectation of mankind. Whether that expectation be the reſult of tradition, or of reaſon, or of ſome

peculiar principle in the conſtitution of man, is nothing to the purpoſe; the fact is, expectation of a future ſtate has univerſally and through all ages prevailed. Sixthly, it is prejudicial to the intereſts of mankind, as it tends to exterminate a doctrine of the greateſt moral utility, the doctrine of future retribution. Seventhly, it is irreconcilable with the moral attributes of the Deity; for it takes away that which, if allowed, at once removes*

* "*Allow only the preſent life to be connected with a better, and every objection to divine benevolence ceaſes of courſe. Is it not, then, more reaſonable to admit and maintain this connection, than to oppoſe our viſionary difficulties (founded, for the moſt part, on the narrowneſs of our views, and the obſcurity of our conceptions) to thoſe innumerable marks of wiſdom and goodneſs which ſhine forth through the whole creation.*"—Dr Balguy's "Divine Benevolence," p. 102.

all objections to the wiſdom and goodneſs of God in the diſpenſations of his providence, objections raiſed on the ſuppoſed or real exiſtence of partial evil. Thus much even natural religion could anſwer; but revelation ſpeaks more confidently, and ſays, aſſuredly there ſhall be a reſurrection of the juſt and the unjuſt.

Between the revelation which aſſerts, and the philoſophy which denies, the ſoul's immortality, there is this ſtriking difference—the former reſts all its doctrines on the truth of certain facts; the latter can proceed only on conjecture: of courſe the one is as much more deſerving of credit than the other, as experimental knowledge is a more ſure guide than ſpeculative theory.

22. It is falſe in diſclaiming divine aſſiſtance to the human mind.

The ſtrength of his body and the

faculties of his mind man derives originally from God. Whether he receives them *immediately* from his Maker, or through the intervention of ſecond cauſes, the caſe is the ſame in effect; for he muſt in either caſe alike refer it ultimately to God. The talents, then, which in vague and indiſtinct language we call *natural* endowments, are the gift of God, and they are beſtowed in degrees which differ exceedingly,* not only in different perſons, but at different times in the ſame perſon. This diver-

* "*It ought likewiſe to be obſerved, that as active power in man, and in every created being, is the gift of God, it depends entirely on his pleaſure for its exiſtence, its degree, and its continuance, and therefore can do nothing which he does not ſee fit to permit.*"—Dr Reid "On the Active Powers of Man," Eſſay IV., chap. v., p. 310.

ſity proceeds very frequently not from any concurrence of the human will, nor from the apparent operation of any phyſical cauſe; it reſults from the energy of ſome power which man can neither ſee, explain, nor command — that power which we term divine.

The eſſence of divine power is to work *all* things not implying a contradiction.* As it confers ability to the mind in one degree, it may confer the ſame to degrees infinite; it may increaſe and ſtrengthen the moral faculties in any meaſure whatever; for, being omnipotent in its nature, it can experience no other reſtraint than what to the Supreme Being, in whom it reſides, may ſeem expedient. Thus, then, it is evident,

* "*Contradiction, which to God himſelf*
Impoſſible is held, as argument
Of weakneſs, not of power."
Milton's "Par. Loſt," x. 799.

that if it be the *will* of God to grant divine aſſiſtance to the human mind, he certainly hath the *power* to grant ſuch aid.

That he ſhould have the *will*, may be conceived from his attributes; for, being himſelf both juſt and holy, he cannot but *will* that his rational creatures ſhould be juſt and holy; and being alſo good and benevolent, he cannot but be inclined, through his goodneſs and benevolence, to help thoſe who *would* be juſt and holy, but who, if left to the mere ſtrength of their own reſolution, cannot, through their infirmity, execute the virtuous and pious deſigns which in truth and ſincerity their minds purpoſe.

That God then hath the *power* to aſſiſt the human mind is incontrovertible; and that he ſhould have the *will*, may, from his attributes, fairly be concluded. It remains to be conſidered whether he

actually doth assist the human mind. And here we have much stronger reasons for affirming than for denying the question. For, in affirming it, we are justified by having proved that God *certainly* is able, and *most probably* is willing, to grant assistance: and we, moreover, have on our part this circumstance—viz., that no reasoning of man can possibly ever disprove our assertion, when we maintain that God does assist us. On the other hand, those who disclaim divine assistance, argue in contradiction to what God *certainly can* and *probably does* effect, and set up their own bare assertion as sufficient to prove that God does *not* assist the human mind. But what man is competent to decide thus peremptorily that God does *not* assist our minds? What finite being can take upon himself to declare all the ways and operations of a Being Infinite?

The diſclaiming, then, of divine aſſiſtance being contrary to the nature of man, who receives *all* his faculties from God, and irreconcilable with the attributes which diſpoſe God to love holineſs and to help thoſe who deſire to be holy; as, moreover, it proceeds on an aſſumption which neither argument nor fact can ever ſupport to ſuch an extent as to prove that divine aſſiſtance is *not* communicated to man—the poſition is to be given up, as not founded on any reaſoning admiſſible in ſound philoſophy.

23. It is falſe in teaching men to think it a matter of indifference, whether they hold right or wrong opinions.

Having received from his Maker, for *good* purpoſes, a mind as well as a body, man is equally bound to make a proper uſe of both; and he is alike culpable, whether he knowingly and wilfully con-

tracts intellectual or bodily vices. But wrong opinions are intellectual vices; and ſo far as our will is concerned, either in neglecting to ſearch for truth, or in diſqualifying the mind for perceiving it, or in reſiſting the force of it when perceived, ſo far our wrong opinions are chargeable on us as crimes, becauſe they proceed from an abuſe of thoſe powers which were intended to help us in forming a right judgment, and which would have led us to juſt concluſions, unleſs through our own fault.

It may farther be remarked, that as opinions are commonly the principles of action, and it cannot be matter of indifference whether men act right or wrong, ſo neither can it be indifferent whether their opinions be right or wrong; for as they think, ſo in general they act. It is therefore of great conſequence that we form right opinions.

What opinions *are right* we may now eaſily collect, from the obſervations which have been made on thoſe that are erroneous. We will briefly ſtate them.

Man, living in ſociety, is ſubject to reſtraints; but, in return, is entitled to protection of his property, his freedom, and his perſon. To this protection all who have not, by tranſgreſſing the laws, forfeited the benefit of them, have an equal claim: but equality of condition in rank and fortune cannot poſſibly exiſt.

The paſſions of ſome men would prompt them to violate the rights of others, were they not reſtricted by laws; hence laws are requiſite. But perfection in thoſe laws cannot practically be found to that degree which, ſpeculatively, might be wiſhed. Nor ought it to be expected; becauſe the framers of them are themſelves imperfect, and, as

ſuch, can neither make proviſions for all the caſes that may poſſibly require legiſlative conſideration, nor can they foreſee all the various ways in which the proviſions they do make may poſſibly operate. Particular laws, relating to particular circumſtances and individual perſons, may be readily amended as occaſion makes it neceſſary: but with reſpect to a complicated ſyſtem, that embraces a large community, and where conſequences of great moment would proceed from alteration, ſufficient it is if laws, *upon the whole*, are as good as circumſtances will admit. When ſuch they are, a change of them is not capriciouſly and precipitately to be attempted; more eſpecially if in the attempt we hazard the loſing of what is confeſſedly good, and have reaſon to fear the adopting of what eventually may prove extremely pernicious.

Of thoſe privileges which we claim

under the law, the perverſion is criminal; and concern for the general welfare requires the checking of ſuch perverſion, leſt thoſe who obſerve the laws ſhould ultimately be deprived of their privileges, which would be the caſe, not only if the governing power ſhould exceed the due meaſure of authority, but equally ſo if there ſhould prevail an intemperate miſapplication of liberty to bad purpoſes.

The end of law is juſtice. The idea of juſtice ariſes from a preſumption that ſomething is in itſelf *right* and ſomething *wrong*. No circumſtances can warrant the intentional commiſſion of *wrong*; becauſe the obſerving of *right* is our duty both in private and public life. The truth of theſe ſentiments is proved by the ſalutary influence of them in the hiſtory of mankind through all ages; they are not, therefore, to be abandoned for ſpeculative extravagances, deſtructive

to man; nor is man allowed to ſacrifice the dictates of reaſon to the violence of paſſion.

There is in man an active and intelligent principle, diſtinct from matter, and unlike to it, which we call mind. By this we are led to conclude, from the works of creation, that there muſt be a God, and from the hiſtorical evidence of facts, that Chriſtianity muſt be true. In reaſoning on the nature and the works of God, and in examining circumſtances related in the Goſpels, however incompetent we may find our underſtanding to reſolve queſtions which may ariſe to our thoughts, yet ſuch incompetency cannot deſtroy, cannot weaken, the poſitive certainty of *facts;* thoſe *facts* on which we reſt our faith, and by conviction of which we embrace a religion, in itſelf moſt excellent, though by its profeſſors corrupted or miſapplied—the religion of the Goſpel.

The reaſoning of our minds diſcerns the providence of God, whom *openly* to acknowledge and to adore is a duty of moral obligation, a duty of prudence, a duty conſonant with the nature of man, and correſponding with the univerſal practice of mankind.

The views of man are not to be confined to the preſent ſtate of exiſtence only. That he hath a ſoul deſtined for immortality, both natural and moral arguments tend ſtrongly to demonſtrate, and revelation expreſſly declares. To prepare himſelf for happineſs in a ſtate of immortality, by diſcharging the duties aſſigned him here, is the great buſineſs of man's life; in which important work, his endeavours to be juſt and holy will be forwarded by divine aſſiſtance, if he will ſupplicate the Almighty for ſpiritual aid.

This is a ſummary of right opinions, reſulting from a view of thoſe doctrines

which would render us unfit for ſociety, diſaffected to our country, regardleſs of moral virtue, and careleſs about religion.

It might have been conceived, that philoſophy ſo prejudicial as well as falſe would everywhere have been holden in the deteſtation it deſerves, did not experience unhappily ſhow that it hath influence much too extenſive. For the reception it hath found is to be aſſigned this cauſe—viz., that it immediately and in the moſt flattering manner applies to the appetites, which it indulges without reſtraint; whereas detection of its fallacies, and the cultivation of true philoſophy, require control of ſenſual affections and vigorous exerciſe of reaſon. But then, on the other hand, it is to be remembered, that in the very circumſtance of applying itſelf to the lower faculties of human nature, and indeed commonly to the moſt ignorant part of

mankind, it betrays a conſciouſneſs of its own inferiority to that wisdom which claims the attention of intellect and thought. Grovelling, therefore, as it is,* let it be rejected with high diſdain by every mind that feels a commendable pride in being endued with powers not merely brutal, but rational. And thoſe who have not yet perceived by reflection

* *The terms in which Biſhop Wilkins ſpeaks of the Epicurean philoſophy are ſtrictly and literally applicable to the falſe philoſophy of the preſent age:*

"*It doth debaſe the underſtanding of man, and all the principles in him that are ſublime and generous, extinguiſhing the very ſeeds of honour, and piety, and virtue, affording no room for actions or endeavours that are truly great and noble; being altogether unworthy of the nature of man, and doth reduce us to the condition of beaſts.*"— "Principles of Natural Religion," l. ii. c. ix. p. 404.

the faculties of their own mind, nor have attained to a due ſenſe of the capacity for improvement with which they are born, ſuch perſons will do well to truſt the experience of others, until their own judgment is mature; they will do well to rely on the veracity of the ſerious and inquiſitive, who, after patient reſearch, aſſure them of a truth, that all the paradoxes of falſe philoſophy are but ſnares of ſophiſtry, calculated to ſeduce them from maxims of approved excellence, and from principles which have been known and ſeen to be moſt ſalutary in their tendency to inſure the ſafety, advance the dignity, and promote the rational happineſs of man.

Unleſs there be allowed ſome firſt principles, ſome fundamental axioms, to which we may refer as ſtandards of

truth, there can be no rule, either in moral or mathematical ſcience, by which to determine whether an argument be juſt or falſe. In denying, therefore, all thoſe firſt principles in which mankind have univerſally agreed, falſe philoſophy ſhows its *folly*. For *folly* it is to oppoſe reaſon; and nothing ſurely can be more in oppoſition to reaſon than to undermine the very groundwork of all reaſoning.

In points of diſcuſſion not recondite, an enlarged mind very ſoon diſcerns the intermediate connection between the ſubject and the concluſion; it requires not, therefore, every *minute* conſequence to be diſtinctly marked in the ſeries of argumentation; nor does it interrupt the courſe of reaſoning by ſtarting futile and frivolous objections. Falſe philoſophy diſcovers its *littleness*, in not having comprehenſion capable of reaching from the

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ſatisfy the reader that of the arguments and proofs uſed in this diſcourſe, in defence of the better cauſe, none are ſuperfluous. Such, indeed, ſome of them might well have been conſidered, were it not become a practice, in morals and philoſophy alike vicious, either poſitively to deny, or captiouſly to diſpute, the validity of opinions in their nature indubitable as that there is light at noonday. But this ſceptical heſitation about known truths is equally far from indicating ſtrength of mind, as that delicacy which nauſeates ordinary ſuſtenance is contrary to the ſymptom of a firm conſtitution.

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